

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023

BEARKAT BATTALION

NEWSLETTER



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EAT 'EM UP KATS!

Welcome back to all returning students and a warm welcome to the new Cadets of the Sam Houston State University ROTC program! As we embark on another academic year, we are filled with enthusiasm and determination to excel in all facets of leadership, discipline, and service. The ROTC program at SHSU has a rich tradition of producing outstanding Officers and leaders, and we are confident that each of you will contribute to this legacy in your own unique ways. Whether you are stepping onto campus for the first time or returning to continue your journey, know that you are joining a community that values integrity, teamwork, and a commitment to excellence. This program will challenge you, push your boundaries, and forge unbreakable bonds among your fellow Cadets! Get ready to learn, to grow, and to make a difference both within our university and beyond. Your dedication to duty and your pursuit of knowledge are commendable, and we are excited to see you thrive as you embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. Welcome back, Bearkats, to a year filled with accomplishments and the promise of a bright future!



Cadet of the Year (2022-2023) Jackson Hyams Holding the BN guidon In front of the formation

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Planning Conference PT (From Left to Right) CDT Boucher, CDT Pogue, CDT LeBlanc, CDT Shell, CDT Calma, CDT Morrison, CDT Slott, CDT Wright-Burwinkel, CDT Davee, CDT Sitowski, CDT Salinas

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THE NEXT GENERATION

CONTRACTING CADETS



Left to Right
Cadets Thelma Gurrola, Lauren Silva, Jesus Ortega Alvarez, Kaleb Brown, Diego Paez, Haggai Gonzales, and Taylor Knight



Cadet Thelma Gurrola
MSIII

WE ARE THE FUTURE!!

Congratulations to each and every one of you for your decision to contract into ROTC and embark on the path to becoming Army Officers. Your dedication to this path is truly commendable and reflects your unwavering commitment to our nation's defense. This significant decision showcases your readiness to embrace leadership, service, and personal growth. As you journey forward, know that you have the support of not only the ROTC program but also your fellow Cadets. The opportunities that await you as Army officers are both rewarding and impactful. There is no doubt that you all will excel in this important role, and your future is undoubtedly bright. Best of luck on this incredible journey ahead!



Cadet Kaleb Brown
MSII



**Cadet Diego Paez
MSII**



**Cadet Taylor Knight
MSII**

I'm really excited to be a part of the program as an official contracted cadet. I want to thank all my great leadership and great other subordinates over me that really helped me out for the last few semesters. I'm glad to be back from my injury and ready to get to work and come back. Go Bearkats!

- Cadet Taylor Knight



**Cadet Jesus Ortega Alvarez
MSI**



**Cadet Haggai Gonzales
MSI**



**Cadet Lauren Silva
MSII**

New SHSU Cadre

MAJOR ANGEL RODRIGUEZ

Major Angel Noel Rodriguez enlisted in the United States Army Reserves in 2005. He completed his Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia, as a 92A (Automated Logistics Specialist) in the fall of the same year. In 2006, he reclassified to 92M (Mortuary Affairs Specialist) and joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) as an MS III in the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP). He was commissioned as a Reserves Quartermaster Officer in 2008 through the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico ROTC after obtaining his Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting.

After commissioning, he was assigned on active duty to the 364th Quartermaster Company in Fort Liberty, NC, where he served as the Platoon Leader of the biggest Multi-Class Supply Support Activity, providing direct support to 374 active and reserve customer units in the XVIII Airborne Corps and 82nd Airborne Division. In 2010, he was assigned as the Platoon Leader of the Petroleum Oil and Lubricants and Water Purification Platoons, providing 150,000 gallons of bulk fuel and water purification capabilities in support of the 82nd Airborne Division Joint Forcible Entry Exercise (JFEX), Joint Operations Access Exercise (JOAX), and Outload Support Team (OST) fuel missions in support of the Global Response Force (GRF).

In 2011, after the end of his active duty assignment, he returned to the Army Reserves with the 246th Mortuary Affairs Company in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, as the PE Depot Platoon Leader for a short period before becoming the Unit Administrator (MILTECH) and Platoon Leader of a Grow the Army unit in 2012. During his assignment as Platoon Leader and civilian federal employee, MAJ Rodriguez activated the 474th Engineer Platoon (Area Clearance) in Orlando, Florida, after a long deactivation since 1952. In 2013, after being promoted to Captain, he was selected as the Battalion S4 of the 841st Engineer Battalion in Miami, Florida.

In 2014, he entered the Active Guard Reserves (AGR) program with the 1-411th Logistics Support Battalion out of Fort Knox, KY. In his first assignment as AGR, he had the opportunity to perform in the Battalion Executive Officer, Battalion S4, Battalion S3, and Observer, Controller/Trainer (OC/T) capacity. After his assignment with the 1-411th LSBN, he served as the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade S4 and Logistics Officer in Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, from 2017 through 2021, when he was assigned as the Battalion S3 and Executive Officer of the 2-381st Training Support Battalion in Grand Prairie, Texas until 2023 before his assignment to Sam Houston State University. Throughout his career, MAJ Rodriguez has been exposed to multiple leadership and staff positions that allowed him to utilize previous lessons learned from his assignments to the success of his Soldiers and benefit the organization.

Major Rodriguez is married to Mizraim Medina and has five children: Adriana (19) and Angeliz (16), Joseph (13), Angel (5) and Noah (2).



New Cadet Battalion Commander

CADET AVERY SITKOWSKI

Bearkat family, I am excited to welcome you all back to what will be another outstanding year for the Sam Houston State University Bearkat Battalion. I am Cadet Avery Sitkowski, and I get to introduce myself as the Cadet Battalion Commander with a tremendous amount of pride.

This summer, our cadets have been able to participate in outstanding training, including Cadet Summer Training, Cadet Troop Leading Training, Internships from across the Army, Air Assault, Airborne, and so much more. As we continue into the start of this new semester, I look forward to reconnecting with the rest of the Battalion and using our training to prepare us all for the future better. Continuing into this semester, my MSIV peers and I are looking to use our vast experience from our Cadet Summer Training (CST) to build the rest of the Battalion. We all wish to enhance our cadets' and make them future Leaders of Soldiers. Still, we also want to ensure that everyone who comes into our program leaves as a better, more professional individual.

Remember always to try hard, do your best, and to Eat'Em Up Kats!



Battalion Commander Avery Sitowski leading his Squad at CST



Battalion Commander Avery Sitowski meeting with Lieutenant General Karebler, CDR US Army Space and Missile Defense Command

This We'll Defend

THE NEW MS4 COMMAND & STAFF



**Battalion Commander
Avery Sitkowski**



**Command Sergeant
Major Cinnamon Wright-
Burwinkel**



**Battalion XO
Bailey Pogue**



**Company Commander
Rashaad Hammond**



**Company Commander
Faith Calma**



**Battalion S1
Kynnyth LeBlanc**

Be All You Can Be!

THE NEW MS4 COMMAND STAFF



Battalion S3
Ryan Coker



Ranger Challenge Leader
Battalion S4
Nicholas Watson



Battalion S5
Tutoring OIC
Arly Cruz-Florez



Battalion S6
Samuel McNaughton



Battalion S8
Cinthia Salinas



Land Navigation OIC
Michael Thille



Land Navigation AOIC
Corey Morrison



Battalion S2
Emmett Gray

This We'll Defend

THE NEW MS4 COMMAND & STAFF



Color Guard OIC
Emily Slott



Assistant S4
Blaine Nowak



PT OIC
Jack Boucher



Battalion S1-A
Haley Davee



Tailgate OIC
Carson Shell



OPFOR OIC
William Mills



Newsletter OIC
Mason Kizer

Summer Training Internship

CADET HALEY DAVEE

After attending Advanced Camp, many cadets have the opportunity for follow-on training such as Cadet Troop Leadership Training (CTLT) or an Internship. I was afforded the chance of a Medical Service CTLT in South Korea. It was a memorable experience that significantly shaped my perspective of the military and its attributes. I shadowed the platoon leader of Evac North, a platoon within the 560th MCGA whose role was ground ambulance evacuation. The soldiers of Evac North were passionate individuals who taught me much about combat medical treatment and even allowed me to learn some of the equipment hands-on. I learned how to stick IVs and insert nasopharyngeal airway devices (NPAs), and amongst learning about other combat trauma care equipment, I even participated in their Combat Life Saver (CLS) training and received my certification.



Cadet Haley Davee learning Korean Drills

The most impactful moment of this trip was the three days we stayed with the Korean ROTC cadets. We arrived during their equivalent of Advanced Camp and were able to experience their tactics and drills. These drills were somewhat unfamiliar to me, but the squad I was assigned to was very welcoming and more than willing to answer any questions I had- and I had several. Furthermore, their military customs were similar in saluting higher-ranking officers but wildly unfamiliar. The Korean cadets were extraordinarily kind, and I am forever thankful for how quickly they pulled me in and taught me their customs.



Cadet Haley Davee conducting training with the Korean Units

At the end of this trip, we met with the ROTC Commander, a two-star general. He thanked us for continuing the legacy of the officers before us and expressed the importance of our mission. The amount of genuine gratitude we received from the Korean Officers was not only overwhelming but eye-opening. The United States has been involved in many conflicts since its birth, so arguably, one does not truly outweigh the other in significance. However, for South Koreans, The Korean War is the first war they fought that left deep wounds in its infrastructure and one that isn't over. Moreover, not only was the United States the first responder to that conflict, but the amount of aid given was astounding compared to our counterparts. Even now, decades later, the Korean people are still grateful to the United States for aiding them in their time of need. I felt immense pride to be able to represent a generation of soldiers and officers who had responded so strongly to helping those in need. One of the main reasons I joined was to serve my country and be a part of something far more significant than myself. I am beginning to understand the impact and influence of the United States military on other countries and what it means to be an Army officer representing our core values.

Eat 'Em Up Kats!

Basic Camp Experience

CADET CATHERINE BENTON

When I arrived at Basic Camp, I didn't know what to expect. I was both scared and excited because I was eager to learn new things and become a better leader. I enjoy working with new people and acquiring new skills. Being able to expand my skill set and bring that back to my university is something I'm proud of. The most challenging part for me was the night infiltration course. I wasn't prepared for so much happening at once. I told myself that I couldn't give up and needed to push through. Keep going because you will reach the end. Overall, I loved the experience, and I can't wait to do it again next year at Advanced Camp!



Cadet Benton bonding with other Basic Camp cadets.



Cadet Benton with her fellow Basic Camp cadets.



Cadet Benton Graduating from Basic Camp

Airborne School

CADET JACOB CLEMENT



Cadet Jacob Clement's class
Final Jump



Cadet Jacob Clement after the
Final Jump

Airborne school was a surreal experience, and I am blessed to have had the chance to attend a course with immense historical ties of bravery and courage. The training is split into three phases: ground week, tower week, and jump week. My instructors in my class were professional and highly encouraging, and all had a great sense of humor. What made the training so great were the people around me. Connecting with various Soldiers was a first-time experience for me, and making friends with people who were all going their separate ways after training was unique. The adrenaline rush and adventure of jumping out of an aircraft was ten times cooler and more intense than I could have imagined. Although no amount of training can prepare you mentally for throwing your body out of an aircraft, the action is not scary but rather inspiring.

My advice to future Cadets attending airborne would be to make friends with the people around you, especially those in front and behind you. You all will do pretty much everything together, and when there's downtime, it's better to laugh than keep to yourself. Trust your equipment, and don't let the fact that everything you do is leading up to you exiting an aircraft eat away at your mind.

Air Assault Training

CADET TANNER STONE

The reason why I wanted to go to Air Assault was to do something hard, something that was way out of my comfort zone. Most of the people I looked up to and respected in the Army profession had the opportunity to attend the school, and I wanted to follow in their footsteps. I knew that over the summer, I wanted to challenge myself in every way possible, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Air Assault gave me quite the exercise in all of those aspects.

If you want to go or are unsure if you want to, I advise you to try it. You will meet friends within the two weeks you go that will impact you for the rest of your life. If you're scared, that's ok. I went from getting scared on the Bearkat Orientation Obstacle course to jumping out of helicopters; life is about getting out of your comfort zone and trying new things. Throughout this summer, my experience at Air Assault School reinforced my love for the Army, and I wish all future cadets the chance to go.



Cadet Tanner Stone bonding with fellow Air Assault Cadet



Cadet Sweeny (L) Cadet Stone (R)

Air Assault Training

CADET WILLIAM RATLIFF



Cadet William Ratliff (L)
Cadet Jacob Clement (R)

Preparing for Air Assault was one of the most stressful things I've done, and I don't stress easily. I got into my head way too much, and when I got there, it wasn't even close to what I had expected. The environment that I thought I would be in was nothing compared to the positive and motivational environment there. I met a large group of like-minded and put-together cadets who were my lifeline to success at Air Assault. The events may have been individual, but we were all together. "10 most challenging days in the army" translates to "10 longest days in the army." There were obstacles to overcome, but it was a weight off your back once it was done. My best advice is to live in the moment while you are there. The training and people there are fantastic, so make sure you get out of your head a little and take a moment to cherish the opportunity to be there.



Cadet William Ratliff being awarded his Air Assault Wings



Eat'Em Up Kats from Fort Campbell, TN!

What to look forward to!

OCTOBER



Hear about Cadet Kynnyth LeBlanc story from ROTC Advance Camp

Find out about the Army ten Miler Club from Cadet James Cooke the Special Events they have planed.



Read up on the how ROTC program helps cheer on the Bearkat Football team and catch a glimpse of the program's Tail Gate experience !